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one every historian will find useful and which he will be glad to consult. The author also deserves praise for the clear manner in which he has treated this subject otherwise so obscure.

HILMAR H. WEBER.

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**Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln.** Now first brought together by Gilbert A. Tracy. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company. The Riverside Press of Cambridge, 1917. Pp. 264. Price \$2.50 net.

To assemble the letters brought together in this volume required intelligence, industry, and affection. Doubtless Mr. Tracy was delighted with his theme, and, we may inquire, who would not have been? He found his labors agreeable, though he discovered one citizen who had no practical sympathy with even this interesting inquiry. Thrice fortunate must be the investigator, and of address surpassing the celestial, who does not sometimes come upon traces of the boor, for the species has not perished from the earth; a few still wander about our forlorn world. Objects exceedingly bright or conspicuously elevated will oftentimes save insignificance from oblivion. It is probable that "the fool that fired the Ephesian dome," being linked with a goddess chaste and fair, will be remembered as long as Diana herself. For fame an act needs no intrinsic merit if only it chance to be even distantly connected with excellence. Thus in certain circumstances our very limitations may assume a vicarious splendor.

Any book which contributes even slightly to improve our estimate of so distinguished a character as Abraham Lincoln is certain to be welcomed by all readers of American history. Even though a new book about the first of the martyr Presidents contain little that is important, if it only confirm hesitant conclusions concerning some of the minor phases of his remarkable career, it is not without value. The activity of biographers and historians has made President Lincoln better known to American citizens of to-day than he was known, outside of Illinois, to the generation that fought the Civil War.

Of the great President we catch in these notes and letters many glimpses as he toiled upward toward national renown. We see him gracefully and cordially introducing a friend, soliciting

a service for an organization or a community, or furnishing a hint to a fellow Whig; we come upon new proof of his moderate charges for legal advice and a naive announcement of an event in his life which was extremely interesting. To an intimate friend he thus describes it: "Nothing new here, except my marrying, which to me, is matter of profound wonder."

He disclaims any personal indifference to a nomination for Congress, to which in the course of a few years he was elected. From the beginning Lincoln was a master of vigorous, if not elegant expression. In commending Mr. Isaac S. Button he pithily describes his friend as "a trustworthy man and one whom the Lord made on purpose for such business." Another letter of Mr. Tracy's collection shows us an honorable rival for party honors. "Let nothing be said against Mr. Hardin," he cautions a correspondent, and he adds, "nothing deserves to be said against him." If the value of Lincoln's services to the Whig party did not equal those of General Hardin he would *scorn* the nomination "on *any* and *all* other grounds." In other letters may be seen the wise leader who enjoins tranquillity on the members of his uneasy organization; also the man who is never too busy to perform little acts of kindness. After shrewdly forecasting General Taylor's nomination, he modestly adds in a letter to a friend, "you know I can have no intimacy with the President, which might give me a personal influence over him." Practising his principle of "turn about," he clearly stated on a later occasion that he was not a candidate for reëlection. While at the National Capital, he did not forget those whose support had sent him thither, but he never pretended to them to enjoy an influence which he did not possess.

The good Samaritan appears in this brief but characteristic note. "Take care of this boy until tomorrow, or longer if the weather is bad, and send the bill to me." As early as November, 1854, Lincoln was thinking of the United States Senate. As is well known, it was in the effort to gain in Illinois a legislature favorable to his ambition that made him a national character. As he foresaw, he lost the Senate, but in 1860 won the Presidency. Perfect fairness, a master passion of Lincoln, appears in a letter to Owen Lovejoy. He wrote: "Know-Nothingism has not yet entirely tumbled to pieces. . . . About us here, they [the Know-Nothings] are mostly my old political and personal friends,

and I have hoped this organization would die out without the painful necessity of my taking an open stand against them. Of their principles I think little better than I do of those of the slavery extensionists. Indeed I do not perceive how any one, professing to be sensitive to the wrongs of the negro, can join in a league to degrade a class of white men." In harmony with this principle is the note of gratitude shown in a letter to Mrs. Armstrong, who was kind to him in adversity and whose husband had been equally so.

The scope of these letters, of which not a few refer to Lincoln's law business, is considerable, but in all there is evidence of those characteristics which marked the mature statesman. This contribution to Lincoln literature, though not extremely valuable, is nevertheless entitled to respectful consideration. Without it there will be gaps in one's knowledge of the great war President and of his times.

CHARLES H. MCCARTHY.

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**The Book of The High Romance**—A Spiritual Autobiography by Michael Williams. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918. Pp. 350. Price \$1.60.

This is the story of one who gave up Catholicism and wandered hither and thither in response to spiritual impulses which finally found satisfaction only in the Church. Under the guidance of *The Little Flower* the author has come home again.

American Catholic confessional literature is generally a bald, matter of fact account of conversion. By contrast Mr. Williams' book is unique in this country. It is literature, though as a piece of writing its very spontaneity gives it certain faults. It is apologetics, and though it is free from the precisions of theology, no personal narrative need forfeit validity for that reason. The historically-minded will welcome a description of some of the outstanding forces of radical anti-Christian intellectualism in America. And they will also see in microcosm the post-Reformation world of thought and feeling, though Mr. Williams does not put himself forward as a parable of the universe.

But it is as "High Romance," a sincere "spiritual autobiography," that the book, thus accurately entitled, will make the greatest of its many appeals.

JOSEPH EGAN.